UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/365
12 May 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS PREVENTIVE DEPLOYMENT FORCE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1082 (1996) of 27 November 1996. By that resolution the Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) until 31 May 1997 "with a reduction of its military component by 300 all ranks by 30 April with a view to concluding the mandate as and when circumstances permit". In the same resolution the Council requested the Secretary-General to report to it by 15 April 1997 with his recommendations on a subsequent international presence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Council subsequently decided, in its resolution 1105 (1997) of 9 April 1997, to suspend the reduction of the military component until the end of the current mandate on 31 May and requested me to submit to the Council by 15 May the report referred to in resolution 1082 (1996).

II. COMPOSITION, STRENGTH AND MANDATE OF UNPREDEP

2. Since my predecessor's last report to the Security Council on 19 November 1996 (S/1996/961), the composition, strength and mandate of UNPREDEP have remained unchanged. The mission continues to be headed by my Special Representative, Mr. Henryk Sokalski (Poland). The Force's military component consists of two mechanized infantry battalions: a Nordic composite battalion and a United States Army task force, each with a strength of 500 personnel. The two battalions are supported by a 50-man engineering platoon from Indonesia. UNPREDEP also has 35 military observers and 26 civilian police monitors drawn from 27 countries (see annex). The military component of the mission is headed by the Force Commander, Brigadier-General Bo Wranker (Sweden).

3. The present composition of the Force represents a blend of professional skills which allow for the highest levels of readiness and proficiency. It also provides for a limited reserve capacity to meet a wide range of contingencies in adverse terrain and climatic conditions. The Indonesian engineering platoon

provides indispensable support to the two battalions through the construction of roads and repair of the main supply routes to the observation posts.

4. In addition to the community and border patrols carried out by the civilian police and the military observers, UNPREDEP military personnel conducted more than 190 patrols a week during the reporting period. On average, UNPREDEP observes approximately 90 patrols per week by the armed forces of Albania, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the host country. However, during the month of March 1997, the number of those patrols increased to more than 160 per week. Furthermore, UNPREDEP reports that military units of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and those of the host country now actively patrol their territory up to the old administrative border of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It is the view of UNPREDEP that those patrols are closely linked to the process of demarcating the border between the two countries. The new pattern of patrolling has increased the frequency of encounters with UNPREDEP patrols operating in those areas and has been a source of concern to the Force Commander. Following consultations, both sides have reaffirmed their intention to respect the understanding on the United Nations patrol line, which was negotiated to facilitate UNPREDEP patrolling based on visible and manageable key terrain features rather than on the old administrative border.

5. Under Security Council resolution 1082 (1996), the strength of the UNPREDEP military component was to have been reduced to 750 personnel by 30 April 1997. The reduced component would have continued to comprise a Nordic composite battalion and a United States Army task force, each with a strength of 350 personnel. The number of observation posts would have been reduced from 21 to 12. Formed infantry units would have remained on the northern border, while the western border would have been monitored by military observers. Support to the two battalions would have continued to be provided by the Indonesian engineering platoon.

6. As the members of the Security Council are aware, the escalation of the crisis in neighbouring Albania earlier this year prompted the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to write to me on 7 March 1997 (see S/1997/205, annex) to request an urgent suspension of the proposed reduction of the strength of the military component. As I informed the Council on 3 April 1997 (see S/1997/276), my Special Representative and the Force Commander had themselves conveyed to me their concern about the timing of the reduction of the Force and, with my agreement, had temporarily suspended the reduction of the military component. The Council, having considered my letter and my related recommendation, decided in its resolution 1105 (1997) of 9 April 1997 to suspend the reduction until the end of the current mandate on 31 May. The Council also welcomed the redeployment of UNPREDEP in the light of the situation in Albania and encouraged me to continue further redeployment, taking into consideration the situation in the region, consistent with the mandate of UNPREDEP. Appropriate measures have been taken on the ground to comply.

7. The establishment of UNPREDEP as an independent mission in 1996 has considerably upgraded its capacity for political action under the terms of paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 908 (1994) of 31 March 1994. The civilian component of the mission has utilized the good offices mandate vested

in my Special Representative to bring together the various communities in an effort to promote mutual understanding, help strengthen respect for human rights and ease political and inter-ethnic tensions within the country. The civilian component of the mission has also been active in initiating contacts among various segments of the population in order to address a number of underlying socio-economic problems which, if neglected or overlooked, have the potential to exacerbate political tensions. This activity has been of special importance given the precarious social and economic situation in the country. Humanitarian assistance to the local population, especially on the part of the national battalions, has also been an important element of the actions of UNPREDEP.

III. ACTIVITIES OF OTHER UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS, AGENCIES AND PROGRAMMES

8. United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes are making a modest but important contribution to the country as regards institutional capacity-building and the strengthening of governmental infrastructure and mechanisms. At the initiative of UNPREDEP, several agencies have also provided assistance in areas crucial to the country's development. These include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute.

International Monetary Fund

9. As previously reported (see S/1996/961, para. 17), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has successfully completed two financial arrangements with the Government: a systemic transformation facility and a standby arrangement, totalling disbursements of US$ 75 million. IMF and the Government have concluded negotiations for an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility agreement which would provide an additional $80 million over a three-year period at concessional interest rates. IMF has also supported numerous technical assistance programmes, including two long-term projects, one with the Department of Banking Supervision of the National Bank and the other a modernization project with the customs administration.

United Nations Children's Fund

10. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) manages a country programme in support of children in the Republic, which has an annual budget of approximately $1.6 million and an unfunded element of $1 million. Its activities focus on the health, education and social welfare sectors and on how they address the transition process. UNICEF is one of the main external partners in the social sector, coordinating its activities with those of the World Health Organization (WHO), UNESCO, the World Bank, UNDCP and a range of national and international non-governmental organizations as well as bilateral donors. More recently, the office has been actively planning cross-border assistance to Albania.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

11. Two international consultants continue to assist in the introduction of the United Nations-designed Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) computer system in the cargo division of the local customs administration. The project is aimed at facilitating trade, improving customs efficiency and providing accurate statistical information on imports and exports. It will be extended to all 21 export offices by May 1997 and will be installed at import locations before the end of the year.

United Nations Development Programme

12. The Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) granted recipient status to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in mid-1993. That led to the implementation of a technical cooperation programme that began in early 1995. The first operational project, jointly supported by UNDP and bilateral donors, was aimed at improving cross-border facilities and traffic infrastructure on the Albanian and Bulgarian borders. The current programme provides support for the preparation of a cross-sectoral national development strategy, as well as assistance in building national capacities for investment promotion, standardization, metrology and quality control. A country cooperation framework outlining the strategy and focus for the Programme's assistance in the coming three years is currently in preparation.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights

13. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights facilitate technical cooperation and serve as a contact point and a source of information for government activities relating to human rights.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

14. In addition to its programme of basic assistance to Bosnian refugees, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continues to be involved in the repatriation of Bosnian refugees to their home country. In collaboration with other agencies, and as an early warning measure, UNHCR has been monitoring developments on the border with Albania.

World Bank

15. Three projects of the World Bank are currently in operation: a $16.9 million health sector transition project, an $11 million private sector development project and a $7.9 million private farmer support project.

16. The World Bank has negotiated a structural adjustment loan and credit of $45 million to support further liberalization of the trade regime, to help reduce price interventions and to assist in the privatization of the socially owned enterprises in agriculture, as well as industrial and commercial enterprises. Together with the European Commission, the World Bank co-chaired the first joint Group of 24/Consultative Group Donors Conference in Brussels to support the country's external financing gap in 1997. Credits and donations of $65 million have been pledged to the economic stabilization and structural reform programme.

World Health Organization

17. The priority areas for cooperation under the 1996-1997 cooperative agreement between WHO and the Ministry of Health include health policy development, health-care reform, prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases, environmental health and mother and child health care.

18. A pioneer training project on mental health aspects of psychosocial trauma has also been launched. A new Mental Health Commission has been established, which will propose comprehensive legislation and reforms on mental health. Two other WHO programmes focus on health promotion for schoolchildren and on a national drug information centre.

IV. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

19. Since my predecessor last reported to the Security Council, there have been few positive developments in the region. In most of the countries neighbouring the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, public unrest and tension have been evident. Social unrest has occurred in Bulgaria and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. State institutions have collapsed and social structures have disintegrated in Albania. The situation in Kosovo remains tense and has been a source of continued concern to the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which remains apprehensive that developments in that region might directly affect the country. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, difficulties have been encountered in the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton peace agreement.

20. In its resolution 1082 (1996), the Security Council reiterated its call on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to implement in full their Agreement of 8 April 1996 (see S/1996/291, annex), particularly regarding the demarcation of their mutual border. While the two Governments have made significant and welcome progress in developing their mutual relations in many areas, no final agreement has been reached on the border demarcation. Both sides have, however, shown a willingness to resolve this issue and have indicated that an agreement could be reached in the very near future.

21. While relations with Greece have further improved, the dispute on the name-related issue remains. My Special Envoy, Mr. Cyrus Vance, continues to pursue actively the search for a mutually acceptable settlement of that issue.

22. Domestically, developments have been uneven. On the one hand, the latest local elections, in which all political parties participated, have strengthened the pluralistic composition of the political scene and the exercise of grass-roots democracy. During the reporting period, the Parliament has established the high office of the Ombudsman and adopted a law on instruction in the languages of the ethnic communities at the pedagogical faculties. It has also passed a declaration on promoting inter-ethnic relations. The rector of 'Tetovo University' has been released before the expiration of his prison term. Mounting social discontent in the wake of the collapse of a large private

savings bank and allegations that some public figures were involved in the scheme responsible for the collapse has been dampened by the Government's assurances that the matter would be investigated thoroughly. All these developments demonstrate that the democratic process is making headway in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

23. At the same time, however, a number of worrisome developments have been observed during the reporting period. The passage of the law on instruction in the languages of the ethnic communities sparked daily protests, followed by a hunger strike, by ethnic Macedonian students. The slogans displayed by the demonstrators and the opposition to any instruction in languages other than Macedonian by some segments of the academic community reflected a degree of intolerance and xenophobia. The law was also criticized as insufficient by the ethnic Albanian political parties, which continued to call for a comprehensive law on higher education that would also legalize "Tetovo University". Simultaneously, radical demands have resumed in some ethnic Albanian communities to establish ethnically based federalism in the Republic. International concern about such developments was expressed in the statement issued by the Presidency of the European Union on 11 March 1997 (A/52/95) and in the conclusions of the Chairman of the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, issued on 13 March 1997. Those developments have tested the country's fragile communal mosaic and have underscored the fact that, unless they are tackled in earnest by all concerned, inter-ethnic relations may ultimately prove to be a significant destabilizing factor in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

24. In a letter addressed to me on 1 April 1997 (S/1997/267), the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia stated that it was his country's view that the current situation in the region, combined with previously unresolved problems, had underscored the need to extend the existing mandate of UNPREDEP for an additional six months. He further stated that the events in Albania had contributed to the continued vulnerable security situation in the region and could have a spillover effect on neighbouring countries. In the light of the increasing number of cases of various armed gangs trespassing into the territory of the Republic, the Minister expressed the view that the presence of an objective foreign entity such as UNPREDEP would be of great importance in verifying or clarifying problems that could arise from such incursions. Additional arguments put forward for extending the mandate of UNPREDEP included, inter alia, the fragile and complex situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the political unrest in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia following the elections in that country, the situation in Kosovo, the continued lack of defensive capacity of the army of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the pending demarcation of the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

25. In meetings with United Nations officials, all levels of the host country's Government have stressed that the monitoring and reporting mandates of UNPREDEP have provided an essential tool for an objective assessment by the international community of the situation in the region. It is the Government's position that the presence of UNPREDEP on the borders of the Republic not only has prevented a radicalization of the crisis in neighbouring areas, notably in Kosovo, but also has effectively stopped active hostilities from spilling over into the country.

UNPREDEP confirms that the recent uncontrolled looting of installations on the Albanian side of the border with the Republic did not spread to communities or border posts in the immediate border area. UNPREDEP also confirms that the refocusing of its activities along the western border and its reinforced and highly visible community patrols in minority villages along the border during the height of the Albanian crisis had a calming effect on the population in those areas. It is the mission's view that its rapid and flexible response increased the confidence of the local population in the ability of the Republic to withstand the potential threat to its stability.

V. OBSERVATIONS

26. As pointed out in my letter of 3 April 1997 to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/276), recent developments in Albania have demonstrated that stability in the Balkan region remains extremely fragile. Uncertainty still prevails in that country, in part because of the lack of a constructive dialogue among the parties. There have been doubts about the possibility of holding free and fair elections in June. In the absence of a legitimate, elected and representative Government and of progress in re-establishing collapsed public institutions, efforts to revive the shattered economy of Albania will be severely undermined. So too will the relative stability established by the multinational protection force. In addition, the lack of a perceptible and early change in the situation in Albania could lead to another explosion of internal violence, which may have a negative impact on neighbouring countries. In this regard, the large number of weapons circulating in the region, some of which have already been interdicted in the border areas by the authorities of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, pose a risk to stability in the region that cannot be neglected. Yet another potentially destabilizing factor in the coming months will be the outcome of the elections scheduled to be held in Bosnia and Herzegovina in September of this year.

27. In the light of the strong views conveyed to me by the Government of the host country for a continued UNPREDEP presence, the continuation of the conditions that led to the suspension of the drawdown of the military component and the challenges to be faced in the region in the near future, I am of the view that it would be imprudent to recommend that the UNPREDEP mission be terminated. I believe it would be equally imprudent to recommend any immediate changes in the mandate or size of the Force at this time. I therefore recommend that the mandate of UNPREDEP be renewed for an additional six months until 30 November 1997. I further recommend that the present strength of the Force be maintained for a period of four months, up to 30 September 1997, with a view to starting as of 1 October 1997, taking into account the conditions prevailing at that time, a two-month phased reduction of the military component to the 750 troop level foreseen by the Council in resolution 1082 (1996).

28. I have in the meantime instructed my Special Representative and the Force Commander to evaluate the effectiveness and composition of each component of the UNPREDEP mission and to provide me in a timely manner with their recommendations on measures that will ensure that the mission implements all of its mandates in a cost-effective and coherent fashion, including the possibility of improving the structure of the military elements of the Force. I have also requested a

reassessment of the present deployment of those elements in order to ensure a higher state of operational efficiency and increased flexibility to respond to changing circumstances on the ground, in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 1105 (1997). I have furthermore instructed UNPREDEP to examine the feasibility of reorganizing the mission in order to enhance the role of the civilian police, military observer and civilian elements in the fulfilment of the mandate.

29. In conclusion, I should like to thank my Special Representative, Mr. Sokalski, as well as the Force Commander, Brigadier-General Wranker, and all the military and civilian personnel under their command, for their dedication and perseverance in carrying out the tasks entrusted to them by the Security Council.

Annex

Composition and strength of the military and civilian police elements of UNPREDEP as at 9 May 1997

Nationality	Military			Civilian police
	Operational	Headquarters	Military observers	
Argentina	-	-	1	-
Bangladesh	-	-	2	-
Belgium	-	-	1	-
Brazil	-	-	2	-
Canada	-	-	1	-
Czech Republic	-	-	1	-
Denmark	39	4	2	-
Egypt	-	-	1	-
Finland	351	14	1	5
Ghana	-	-	1	-
Indonesia	50	1	2	-
Ireland	-	-	2	-
Jordan	-	-	1	2
Kenya	-	-	2	-
Nepal	-	-	1	-
New Zealand	-	-	1	-
Nigeria	-	-	1	1
Norway	41	7	2	-
Pakistan	-	-	2	-
Poland	-	-	2	-
Portugal	-	-	1	-
Russian Federation	-	-	2	1
Sweden	33	9	1	-
Switzerland	-	-	1	6
Turkey	-	-	-	4
Ukraine	-	-	1	4
United States of America	494	13	-	-
Total	1 008	48	35	23[a]

[a] Figures may vary owing to rotations.